

SECTION-BY-SECTION SUMMARY OF THE RESEARCH FOR COMPETITIVENESS ACT

SEC. 1. SHORT TITLE

“Research for Competitiveness Act.”

SECTION 2. NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION INDUSTRIALLY-RELEVANT RESEARCH AWARDS.

Authorizes the Director of the National Science Foundation to carry out a program to award grants to scientists and engineers at the early stage of their careers at institutions of higher education and research institutions to conduct high-risk, high-return research in areas relevant to industry. Sets the duration of the awards to be 5 years and the amount per year to be \$50,000, with an additional \$50,000 available each year as a one-to-one match for funds the awardee raises from industry for the proposed research. Eligible applicants are tenure-track faculty at institutions of higher education or the equivalent at research organizations, such as observatories. Establishes a two stage selection process: review of proposals followed by interviews of finalists. Requires panels reviewing the applications to include representatives from a range of industries. Requires the criteria for awardee selection to include potential of the applicant for leadership at the frontiers of knowledge; the innovative or transformative nature of research in the areas of interest described in the application; the creativity demonstrated in the applicant’s past research activities; and the potential relevance to industry of research in the areas of interest described in the application. Authorizes appropriations for the program of \$3,000,000 for fiscal year 2007; \$6,000,000 for fiscal year 2008; \$9,000,000 for fiscal year 2009; \$12,000,000 for fiscal year 2010; and \$15,000,000 for fiscal year 2011.

SEC. 3. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY INDUSTRIALLY-RELEVANT RESEARCH AWARDS.

Authorizes the Under Secretary for Science of the Department of Energy to carry out a program to award grants to scientists and engineers at the early stage of their careers at institutions of higher education and research institutions to conduct high-risk, high-return research in areas relevant to energy production, storage, and use. Authorizes the Office of Science, the Office of Nuclear Energy Research and Development, the Office of Fossil Energy, and the Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewables to participate in the program. Sets the duration of the awards to be up to 5 years and the amount per year to be \$50,000, with an additional \$50,000 available each year as a one-to-one match for funds the awardee raises from industry for the proposed research. Eligible applicants are tenure-track faculty at institutions of higher education or the equivalent at research organizations, such as observatories. Establishes a two stage selection process: review of proposals followed by interviews of finalists. Requires panels reviewing the applications to include representatives from a range of industries. Requires the criteria for awardee selection to include potential of the applicant for leadership at the frontiers of knowledge; the innovative or transformative nature of research in the areas of interest described in the application; the creativity demonstrated in the applicant’s past research activities; and the potential relevance to industry of research in the areas of interest described in the application.

Requires the Under Secretary to give priority to proposals in which the proposed work includes collaboration with the Department of Energy National Laboratories. Authorizes appropriations for the program of \$2,000,000 for fiscal year 2007; \$4,000,000 for fiscal year 2008; \$6,000,000 for fiscal year 2009; \$8,000,000 for fiscal year 2010; and \$10,000,000 for fiscal year 2011.

SEC. 4. DEFINITION

Defines “Institution of Higher Education.”